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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 2295 (2016), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) until 30 June 2017 and requested me to report on a quarterly basis on its implementation, focusing on progress in the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and the efforts of MINUSMA to support it.

II. Major political developments

A. Implementation of the peace agreement

2. The signatory parties have taken important steps towards the implementation of the peace agreement, including the conclusion of an arrangement aimed at paving the way for the establishment of interim administrations. However, significant challenges remain in advancing political and security measures owing to the continued mistrust among the signatory parties. Progress in the gradual restoration of State authority in the north, the cantonment of combatants and the further integration of armed groups into national security mechanisms remained limited.

Political and institutional measures

3. Referring to the decree on the interim administrations signed on 18 May, the signatory armed groups suspended their participation in the subcommittee on political and institutional matters of the Agreement Monitoring Committee on 20 May. The groups criticized the Government for, inter alia, taking unilateral decisions on the decree. Subsequently, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, Ramtane Lamamra, spearheaded consultations with the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA) and the Platform to resolve the impasse. On 31 May, CMA and the Platform coalition of armed groups issued a statement in Algiers, calling for the rapid establishment of interim administrations, and signed a memorandum of understanding ("protocole d'entente") to strengthen their coordination on security, political and administrative matters. On 15 June, Mahamadou Diagouraga was appointed as the High Representative of the President for the implementation of the peace agreement. His office replaced the national committee for the coordination of the implementation of the peace agreement.

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4. Meanwhile, on 19 June, the Malian parties reached an agreement on the modalities for the establishment of the interim administrations in the five northern regions. The ceremony was attended by the Secretary-General of the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), Bilal Ag Acherif, who travelled to Bamako for the first time in six years. Algeria and MINUSMA played a major role in facilitating his visit.

5. In spite of the above-mentioned progress, during the reporting period, there was an increase in tensions between CMA and the Platform over the control of Kidal, which had been latent since the Anéfis talks of October 2015 and the subsequent entry into Kidal of the Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs imghad et alliés (GATIA), which is part of the Platform, in February 2016. On 6 June, the Platform denounced what it considered to be an inequitable division of power in Kidal between CMA and the Platform, to which CMA reacted by stating that CMA remained in charge of the management of the town. On 14 July, representatives of CMA and the Platform held discussions in Niamey, at the invitation of the Government of the Niger, to address outstanding political and security issues between them. On 17 July, an agreement was reached by the two groups on the joint management of Kidal and other measures to reduce tensions.

6. However, on 19 July, shooting erupted between CMA and the Platform in Kidal, resulting in the deaths of a combatant from each group and a civilian. On 21 July, CMA and the Platform clashed again in Kidal, resulting in the deaths of at least 14 people and the injuring of 89 others, including both combatants and civilians. The fighting continued through 22 July. In a statement issued on 21 July, MINUSMA condemned the violation of the ceasefire, called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and announced its intention to conduct an investigation as soon as the security situation permitted. My Special Representative for Mali used his good offices to engage with the leadership of the armed groups and called for calm through a message broadcast on the MINUSMA radio station, Radio Mikado. He also convened a meeting of the international mediation team, who agreed that the issue should be addressed in the framework of the Agreement Monitoring Committee.

7. On 25 July, the Agreement Monitoring Committee held its 10th meeting in Bamako, with representatives of both CMA and the Platform present. The armed groups reiterated the need for the urgent establishment of interim administrations wherever possible. The Government announced that resources had been allocated for the interim administrations and urged CMA and the Platform to swiftly nominate their candidates for appointment. The parties agreed to, inter alia, adjust the timeline for the establishment of the interim administrations in the light of the fighting in Kidal and create an ad hoc committee to accelerate the operationalization of the Operational Coordination Mechanism and of the mixed patrols starting in the Gao region. On that same day, my Special Representative facilitated the return of a GATIA leader from Niamey to Bamako and his subsequent meetings with government officials in order to appease the tensions in Kidal.

8. On 30 July, fighting broke out again between CMA and the Platform in the vicinity of Touzik, approximately 35 kilometres (km) south-east of Kidal, resulting in five combatants killed on each side, three CMA combatants injured and four combatants captured by the Platform. The situation escalated further on 9 August, when fighting erupted once more between CMA and the Platform near Adjlal, 70 km

north-east of Kidal, and Touzik despite a suspension of hostilities agreed by the Technical Commission on Security on 2 August. The clash resulted in 7 CMA combatants killed, 32 others injured and 5 others abducted by GATIA. At least 1 combatant from the Platform was killed and 10 others injured. Both parties issued press statements on 9 August blaming each other for the resumption of hostilities, which ended on 10 August.

9. On 12 August, CMA and the Platform began talks in Bamako under the auspices of High Representative Diagouraga, in collaboration with my Special Representative, the Government of Algeria, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the European Union. The talks were aimed at reaching agreements on: (a) a cessation of hostilities and security arrangements; (b) peaceful coexistence and inclusivity; and (c) acceleration of the implementation of the peace agreement. However, no consensus was reached on any of the issues. As a means to de-escalate tensions, at its meeting held on 25 August, the Technical Commission on Security decided that the mixed units foreseen for Gao would be deployed to Kidal and would begin mixed patrols on October. On 16 September, 16 GATIA combatants attacked a CMA checkpoint at In Tachdait, 90 km north-west of Kidal in the Kidal region, killing at least four CMA combatants. On 18 September, the Platform reportedly took over and occupied a CMA position in In-Khalil, 110 km north of Tessalit in the Kidal region.

10. During the reporting period, and as requested by the parties, MINUSMA provided financial and logistical support for tripartite communication campaigns by Malian stakeholders, to sensitize the public on the interim administrations and the special security measures, including the mixed patrols, in 10 out of 11 regions, with the exception of Kidal, given the recurrence of conflict between the parties.

11. Preparations for the upcoming elections have advanced. On 28 June, the Government announced that the regional and local elections would be held during the first quarter of 2017, the presidential election in July 2018 and legislative elections in November 2018. On 4 July, the Government began the review of the 1992 constitution, with technical assistance from MINUSMA. On 10 August, the Government convened the electoral college for the communal elections, which were first planned for 25 September but subsequently postponed to 20 November. The mandate of communal authorities had expired in 2014, but had been extended by several decrees. Following this announcement, opposition parties and a number of civil society organizations expressed concerns about the challenges facing the planned elections in the north, given the lack of interim administrations, the weak presence of State authority, persistent insecurity and the difficulty in including refugees and displaced persons. To ease tensions, my Special Representative facilitated meetings between the Government and the opposition parties and underlined the importance of dialogue, transparency and inclusiveness. On 9 September, the Parliament adopted the new electoral law. The law provides for, inter alia, a minimum of 30 per cent of female candidates in the lists.

12. On 12 and 13 July, over 500 people, mostly youth, protested in Gao against the establishment of the interim administrations and the exclusion of non-combatants from the cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. At least 3 individuals were killed and 46 injured during the demonstrations, as a result of the use of force by the Malian defence and security forces. Other

demonstrations were held in Bamako, on 14 July and 17 August, and in Timbuktu, on 17 July.

13. The restoration of State authority in the north continued to face challenges. Since my most recent report (S/2016/498), there has been a 2 per cent decrease (from 35 to 33 per cent) in the number of State officials deployed to the northern regions. During the reporting period, the Governor of Ménaka and Taoudenni took up his functions, and as at 20 September, the Governors of Gao, Ménaka, Mopti and Timbuktu were performing their duties in their respective regions, while the Governor of Taoudenni was based in Timbuktu and the Governor of Kidal had yet to deploy owing to security challenges. On 20 June, the National Assembly approved a draft law on the supplementary budget and allocated approximately $3.4 million for the operationalization of State functions in the Ménaka and Taoudenni regions. MINUSMA implemented rehabilitation projects in the areas of rule of law (justice and corrections), defence and security, national reconciliation and social cohesion, as well as logistics in the Ménaka region.

14. In the Gao region, all three prefects and 12 sub-prefects had resumed duties in the urban centres of Ansongo, Bourem and Gao. In the Ménaka region, one out of four prefects and four out of nine sub-prefects were present. In the Mopti region, seven out of eight prefects were in place, whereas only 33 out of 55 sub-prefects were present. In the Timbuktu region, three out of five prefects and 17 out of 31 sub-prefects were deployed. There was no government presence in the regions of Kidal and Taoudenni.

15. On 18 May, 10 additional commissioners, including two women and five members of the signatory armed groups, were appointed to the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, increasing the number of its commissioners to 25. The deployment of the Commission's personnel to the field and opening of its six regional offices had not yet commenced.

16. On 2 August, MINUSMA supported the organization by the Supreme Islamic Council of Mali and the Ministry of National Reconciliation of a national forum on the peace agreement, which brought together religious leaders from all faiths. The forum urged the Government to ensure that the national conference on understanding would be as inclusive as possible in order to achieve national reconciliation.

Defence and security measures

17. The redeployment of the Malian defence and security forces to the northern regions remained dependent on their ability to acquire equipment and receive training. MINUSMA and the forces developed a joint plan, in line with the human rights due diligence policy, for MINUSMA support to the Malian armed forces in the areas of training, logistics, intelligence and operational coordination. Moreover, in support of the redeployment of the Malian police, gendarmerie and National Guards to the north, the MINUSMA police component strengthened its posture in the centre and north of Mali through the deployment of a formed police unit in Gao and 25 additional individual police officers in Ansongo (Gao region), Douentza (Mopti region), Goundam (Timbuktu region) and Ménaka. In strict compliance with the human rights due diligence policy, MINUSMA conducted seven risk assessments for support provided to the Malian armed forces, gendarmerie and police, as well as to the Operational Coordination Mechanism.

18. On 18 August, a month after the attack on their base in Nampala (as described in para. 28), the Malian armed forces requested MINUSMA to help upgrade the protection of their bases, provide air support and conduct joint patrols. In Leré (Timbuktu region), MINUSMA proposed that the Malian armed forces co-locate their soldiers in the MINUSMA camp to facilitate their operations and provide better force protection.

19. Military observers conducted 159 patrols in the Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions and reported violations of the ceasefire in Tabagoud (Timbuktu region) on 27 June, in Atila (Timbuktu region) on 12 July, in Kidal on 21 and 22 July and 2 August, and in the vicinity of Adjlal and Touzik on 30 July and 9 and 10 August. However, no ceasefire violation has been recognized by the Technical Commission on Security since September 2015. There has been an increase in the establishment of checkpoints and military bases by the signatory armed groups, especially in the Timbuktu region, where the number of checkpoints increased from 32 to 48.

20. The Malian parties continued to make progress on the issue of interim security measures. At the meeting of the ad hoc committee to accelerate the operationalization of the Operational Coordination Mechanism, held on 25 and 26 July, the Government agreed to make equipment, including uniforms and vehicles, available. On 20 September, at the meeting of the subcommittee on defence and security matters of the Agreement Monitoring Committee, CMA designated 200 combatants who would join the first mixed patrol in Gao on 20 October. The combatants were expected to undergo the special disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.

21. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process did not commence during the reporting period. Progress continued to be made on the building of the remaining five out of eight cantonment sites in Ber (Timbuktu region), Ilouk, Tabankort and Tin Fatimata (Gao region) and Tessalit (Kidal region). All locations are expected to be operational by October. To date, neither CMA nor the Platform have provided lists of the combatants to begin the cantonment and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes. In partnership with local non-governmental organizations and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), MINUSMA is implementing 44 community violence reduction projects directly reaching 30,000 community members, especially youth, around cantonment sites. The Trust Fund in Support of Peace and Security in Mali funded a resiliency programme for women and youth in the Gao, Kidal, Mopti and Timbuktu regions, reaching more than 1,350 youth. MINUSMA provided technical support to the ad hoc working group on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, which comprised representatives of the Government, CMA, the Platform and the World Bank and sought to finalize the draft national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. On 21 September, CMA provided the lists of nominees for the national commissions on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and on integration, as well as for the National Council for Security Sector Reform.

22. MINUSMA continued to support the Government on security sector reform. The Mission provided material and technical support for the establishment of the National Council for Security Sector Reform. However, the Council is not yet operational. MINUSMA, IOM and Mali's bilateral partners continued to support the National Directorate of Border Management in the Ministry of Territorial Administration in its task of finalizing the review of the national border policy. In

coordination with the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali, MINUSMA worked closely with the Ministry of Internal Security and Civil Protection to finalize the internal security programming law. On 9 June, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita signed a decree establishing the institutional framework for security sector reform, which was an important step forward in reviving efforts to reform and reconstitute the Malian defence and security forces.

B. Other political developments

23. On 7 July, President Keita reshuffled his cabinet for the fifth time, increasing the number of ministers from 32 to 34, including 8 women. The new appointments included a member of CMA and a member of the Platform. On 29 August, President Keita designated Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga, former Minister of Defence, as the new Secretary General of the Presidency with the rank of minister. On 3 September, the Minister of Defence and Veterans was replaced by the Minister of Territorial Administration. The portfolio of territorial administration was merged with that of the Minister of Decentralization and Reform of the State.

C. Regional cooperation

24. On 31 May, my Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, visited Mali as part of a tour of the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) aimed at reaffirming the United Nations engagement at the regional level and discussing the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel with the countries concerned and subregional actors. The Malian authorities called for enhanced coordination of international efforts in support of the Sahel and support for the G-5 Sahel. On 26 July, the Government launched the activities of the National Committee for the Coordination of G-5 Sahel Actions in Mali. The Committee's permanent secretariat coordinates activities and monitors the implementation of the G-5 Sahel road map, with a focus on sustainable development and the fight against terrorism and organized crime. My Special Representative for Mali travelled to the Niger on 25 July, Algeria on 25 and 26 August and Mauritania on 5 and 6 September to discuss regional support for Mali and MINUSMA.

25. In July, the United Nations participated, along with other bilateral and multilateral partners, in an African Union-led technical assessment mission to Mali to help develop regional options to address terrorism and transnational organized crime in the Sahelo-Saharan region. The mission made a number of recommendations to enhance security and stability through political, reconciliation and confidence-building initiatives, the enhancement of the capacity of MINUSMA, the strengthening of Malian security institutions, the reinforcement of existing regional structures and mechanisms for coordination and cooperation in the area of security, and the establishment of an intervention force.

III. Major security developments

26. The slow implementation of the peace agreement continued to fuel the volatile security situation in central and northern Mali, which in turn further obstructed

progress on its implementation. During the reporting period, there were persistent attacks against the Malian and international forces, the resumption of armed confrontation between CMA and the Platform and increased intercommunal violence.

A. Asymmetric attacks

27. During the reporting period, there was a significant increase in attacks against the Malian defence and security forces and MINUSMA, with 39 attacks perpetrated against the Malian forces, 27 attacks against MINUSMA and one attack against a MINUSMA contractor, compared to nine attacks against the Malian forces and 15 attacks against MINUSMA in the previous reporting period. A total of 13 peacekeepers and five MINUSMA contractors were killed, and 32 peacekeepers and five MINUSMA contractors injured, compared to six killed (five peacekeepers and a contractor) and 11 personnel injured in the previous reporting period. A total of 52 soldiers of the Malian armed forces were killed, and 72 others injured, in attacks.

28. The attacks have become increasingly frequent, bold and well coordinated. On 19 July, assailants on 18 vehicles and several motorbikes attacked a camp of the Malian armed forces and checkpoints in Nampala, in the Ségou region, killing 15 soldiers and injuring 34 others. Assailants set fire to the camp and checkpoints after having looted them. On 31 July, the National Assembly extended the state of emergency, first declared on 21 November 2015, until 29 March 2017. On 3 August, Ansar Eddine released a video of five Malian soldiers abducted during the attack. On 9 and 10 August, the bodies of five soldiers reported missing during the attack on 7 August on a convoy of the Malian armed forces in Ténenkou (Mopti region) were found.

29. Meanwhile, on 29 May, five peacekeepers were killed in an attack against a MINUSMA military convoy 25 km north-west of Mopti. On 31 May, one peacekeeper was killed and five peacekeepers and eight civilian staff injured in a complex attack against the Sector East headquarters in Gao. Between 5 and 7 August, MINUSMA vehicles hit roadside bombs on three separate instances, two near Kidal camp and another 11 km south of Aguelhok, resulting in the death of a peacekeeper and the injury of five others. Ansar Eddine claimed responsibility for the attack on 7 August. In addition to complex attacks using rockets, mortars, improvised explosive devices and mines, two attacks were perpetrated against MINUSMA using remote controlled explosive devices in the Kidal region. Such devices had previously been used mostly in the Gao region. The highest incidents of attacks using improvised explosive devices have occurred along the Douentza-Gossi and Gao-Anéfis axes.

30. The signatory armed groups were also targeted by Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb in the Timbuktu region. On 21 July, four MNLA combatants, including the spokesperson in Ber (Timbuktu region), were found dead after having been abducted the previous day. On 29 June, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb allegedly killed the local commander of the High Council for the Unity of Azawad, part of CMA, in Ber.

31. In May, Malian and French forces launched seven counter-terrorism operations in the Goundam (Timbuktu region) and Ménaka sectors, resulting in the arrest of

35 suspected terrorists. On 22 May, Mali and the Niger conducted a joint cross-border counter-terrorism operation in Andéramboukane (Ménaka region).

32. In line with its new mandate, MINUSMA adopted a more proactive and robust operational approach, within the means available. Operation Medica, carried out in mid-August, was one such example, during which MINUSMA carried out area and axis control along the main supply routes from Timbuktu to Douentza (Mopti region) and Gossi (Timbuktu region) with the aim of identifying and arresting terrorists. MINUSMA also conducted four operations to neutralize threats, targeting improvised explosive devices, in particular in the Mopti, Kidal and Timbuktu regions. MINUSMA continued to carry out coordinated patrols with the Malian armed forces and with French forces.

33. MINUSMA continued to provide assistance to the Government in operationalizing the specialized unit on terrorism and transnational organized crime, including by providing assistance in the establishment of a specialized investigative brigade and in training 35 personnel of the Malian defence and security forces on countering suicide bombings. In coordination with partners, MINUSMA supported the Government in drafting a national counter-terrorism strategy. The Mission also provided technical and strategic support to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture in its efforts to prevent violent extremism and the radicalization of youth.

34. From 5 to 9 September, during a visit to Mali, the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, together with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, held consultations with the Government on the next phase of the Integrated Assistance for Countering Terrorism Initiative and on priority projects proposed by Task Force entities as a result of strategic gaps identified in the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in the country. The aim was to provide an "All-of-UN" integrated, coherent and coordinated technical assistance framework for counter-terrorism and the prevention of violent extremism, taking into account the priorities of the Government and ensuring that there would be no duplication of efforts.

B. Protection of civilians

35. The major physical threats to civilians noted during the reporting period include armed banditry; targeted attacks by armed elements, often due to political dynamics; civil unrest; intercommunal violence, often due to land disputes; mines, improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war; and attacks by violent extremists, terrorists and State actors. In response to such threats and to prevent attacks against civilians, MINUSMA continued to carry out medium- and long-range patrols in the northern regions, while United Nations police focused their patrols on urban areas. MINUSMA also enhanced early warning mechanisms, including through community liaison assistants and humanitarian actors.

36. Intercommunal clashes increased in central regions. On 25 June, 18 civilians were killed and 44 injured in violence between the Bambara and Markas communities in the Djenné circle, in the Mopti region. Between 26 August and 3 September, six civilians were killed and nine others injured in the Mopti region as a result of clashes between members of the Bambara and Fulani communities. In support of the Government, MINUSMA has helped to calm the situation, including by facilitating intercommunal dialogue.

37. During the clashes on 21 and 22 July in Kidal, MINUSMA responded swiftly and robustly to place themselves between CMA and the Platform. MINUSMA flew two attack helicopters from Gao to Kidal as a show of force and deployed unmanned aerial systems and two military utility helicopters for enhanced monitoring. On 23 July, MINUSMA established checkpoints in Kidal and started conducting foot patrols to discourage fighting among the armed groups and to protect civilians. When fighting in the vicinity of Kidal town also broke out, MINUSMA assumed a deterrent posture and created a safe haven in close proximity to its camp in the event that civilians should seek protection. A total of 13 civilians sought refuge in the camp, and the Mission relocated 10 civilians to Gao. The fighting in late July in Kidal between the signatory armed groups led to the deaths of seven civilians.

38. On 2 September, unidentified armed assailants attacked Boni, 80 km east of Douentza, in the Mopti region, and briefly occupied the town. The assailants torched the mayor's office and the gendarmerie commander's house and abducted a deputy mayor. On 3 September, MINUSMA deployed a detachment of a battalion from Douentza to conduct patrols and monitor the situation in Boni with the support of attack helicopters. The peacekeepers stayed in the town for four nights and conducted zone control in close coordination with the Malian armed forces.

39. At the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping, held in London on 7 and 8 September, the United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award was awarded to Major Aichatou Ousmane Issaka (Niger) who had been in Sector East since 2015. The award seeks to recognize the efforts of a peacekeeper who has promoted the principles of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). Major Issaka had reached out to women in the local community and joined what would have otherwise been all-male patrols, making them more approachable for women and children.

C. Mine action, weapons and small arms

40. The United Nations Mine Action Service continued to educate conflict-affected communities in central and northern Mali about explosive hazards, reaching 34,961 people, and destroyed 84 explosive remnants of war. As part of capacity-building assistance to the Malian authorities, MINUSMA trained 315 personnel of the Malian defence and security forces on the mitigation of explosive threats. MINUSMA also constructed a weapons and ammunition storage facility and refurbished 11 others.

IV. Human rights

41. MINUSMA documented 117 cases of violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law involving 202 victims, including 23 children, compared with 96 cases involving at least 131 victims in the previous reporting period. The cases involved 19 instances of executions or attempted killings; 18 instances of ill-treatment or torture; 15 instances of illegal detention, involving 31 individuals; 22 instances of extortion or looting; 10 direct attacks against humanitarian or peacekeeping personnel; four instances of abduction; four instances of the recruitment of child soldiers, involving nine children; two instances of sexual

violence; one instance of the military use of a hospital; one instance of forced displacement; and 21 instances of lack of due process as a result of ineffective investigations. Among these abuses, serious abuses, including killings and illegal taxation, were reportedly committed by elements deployed to newly erected checkpoints and military bases by the signatory armed groups, especially in the Timbuktu region. Government forces, CMA, the Platform and other armed groups remained the primary alleged perpetrators, mostly in the northern and central parts of Mali. The human rights investigation conducted by MINUSMA in the aftermath of the fighting in the Kidal region confirmed two instances of arbitrary execution/killing, four cases of physical abuse, one case of abduction, two cases of looting, three cases of ill-treatment and one case of an occupation of a hospital. Dozens of civilians were also forcefully displaced.

42. MINUSMA verified that at least nine children were associated with the Platform, which is part of GATIA, in the Kidal region. Three others were reported among the ranks of CMA, the Coalition du peuple de l'Azawad and the Mouvement populaire pour le salut de l'Azawad in the Timbuktu region. On 29 July, MINUSMA coordinated the transfer of four children associated with GATIA in Kidal to Bamako and, with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund, handed them over to the National Directorate for the Promotion of Children and Families. However, on 4 August, the Directorate handed them over to a member of Parliament with ties to GATIA, in violation of the standard protocol for the care of children associated with armed groups. The Mission called on armed groups to prevent any further recruitment of children and urged the signatory parties to take concrete steps to reduce the impact of conflict on children. For instance, the United Nations provided assistance to MNLA on the action plan to end the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict and sexual violence against children. On 30 June, the Platform signed a statement committing to fight conflict-related sexual violence in Mali and ratified a one-year implementation plan to tackle this challenge.

43. During the reporting period, a total of 106 individuals (of whom four were presumed minors) were arrested for terrorism-related activities in the central and northern regions: 66 by the Malian defence and security forces; 36 by international forces; and 4 by MINUSMA. Of those arrested, 3 were tortured by the Malian defence and security forces and 2 by MINUSMA; 36 were illegally detained by the Malian defence and security forces or French forces; and 1 was killed by MINUSMA. A United Nations board of inquiry has conducted an investigation into the cases involving MINUSMA. Corrective measures will be implemented following the completion of the investigation. Excessive use of force by the Malian defence and security forces was reported during counter-terrorism operations.

44. As at 20 September, MINUSMA had identified 224 conflict-related detainees, including those detained for terrorism-related charges held in State-run detention facilities. Among the detainees were six minors. During the reporting period, the authorities released 81 people for various reasons, including lack of evidence and trial.

45. The illegal detention of individuals by armed groups continued. Since my most recent report, 13 additional individuals were detained by CMA, the Platform, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and others, bringing the total to 27 (14 combatants and 13 alleged civilians).

46. Limited progress was made in combating impunity for serious violations and abuses, including conflict-related sexual violence committed in 2012. MINUSMA held 13 human rights trainings for the Malian armed forces, police, gendarmerie and legal authorities, in collaboration with the European Union Training Mission in Mali and United Nations police. In total, over 1,050 State representatives participated in the trainings, including 118 women. The Ministry of Justice and Human Rights launched 12 investigations into alleged human rights violations as a result of monthly meetings with MINUSMA aimed at reviewing and addressing human rights violations documented by the Mission.

47. Effective 1 July, the specialized protection functions of the Child Protection Unit and the Office of the Senior Women's Protection Advisor were consolidated within the human rights component of MINUSMA.

V. Humanitarian situation

48. The humanitarian situation in Mali remained volatile. In the lean season (June to September), more than 3 million people, or 16 per cent of the Malian population, were food insecure, including approximately 420,000 who needed immediate food assistance. At the end of the academic year in June, 296 out of 2,380 schools remained closed in the crisis-affected regions of Gao, Kidal, Mopti, Ségou and Timbuktu. A total of seven schools remained occupied by the signatory armed groups in Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions. Ténenkou, in the Mopti region, remained the most affected, with 69 per cent of schools closed.

49. The delivery of humanitarian assistance in northern and central Mali was constrained during the reporting period, compared to the previous reporting period, owing to the impact of the rainy season on roads, an increase in criminal assaults against humanitarian workers and the deterioration of the security situation in the Kidal region. As at 20 September, 18 security incidents involving humanitarian actors had been reported, compared to 11 such incidents in the previous reporting period. On 6 June, a warehouse containing a one-month supply of food rations pre-positioned by humanitarian actors for 11,000 people was looted in Kidal. Furthermore, contamination by explosive hazards, including explosive remnants of war, improvised explosive devices and mines, in the northern and central regions continued to restrict humanitarian and civilian access. The continuous closure of the airfield in Kidal added to the access challenges. MINUSMA provided humanitarian actors with helicopter flights between Gao and Kidal to the extent possible.

50. Despite challenging conditions, humanitarian actors continued to operate in the crisis-affected regions, against the backdrop of the limited provision of basic social services by the Government. Humanitarian actors supported the Government in providing food to approximately 420,000 people in the Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions and facilitated education on explosive hazards in conflict-affected communities in central and northern Mali. Humanitarian organizations provided cash assistance and non-food items to returnees. They also supported income-generating agricultural activities to assist the returnees with reintegration into their communities and promote peaceful coexistence between returnees and host community members in the Gao, Mopti and Timbuktu regions. Humanitarian actors continuously urged armed groups to enhance humanitarian access and respect for humanitarian principles.

51. The fighting in the Kidal region in July and August led to the forced displacement of civilians. Since my most recent report, the number of internally displaced persons decreased by 25 per cent, to approximately 39,000, while approximately 134,000 Malian refugees remained in Burkina Faso, Mauritania and the Niger.

52. In July, seasonal flooding caused 13 deaths, destroyed 1,500 houses and affected approximately 10,000 people in the regions of Gao, Kidal, Koulikoro, Ménaka, Mopti, Ségou, Sikasso and Timbuktu, according to government figures. Humanitarian partners supported the Government in distributing relief items.

53. As at 20 September, only $101 million of the total of $354 million for the humanitarian response plan for 2016 had been financed.

VI. Economic development and cultural preservation

54. The return of basic services to the north continued to be hampered by insecurity, limited progress in the return of State authority and the slow operationalization of the Malian regional development agencies. Despite these difficulties, United Nations agencies continued their efforts in support of development and the peace process. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided technical expertise and financial support to the steering committee set up by the Government to develop the national strategy for the prevention of and response to violent extremism and terrorism. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations initiated a programme of livelihood support to 2,500 vulnerable agro-pastoralist households, who were mostly displaced people and returnees in the new region of Ménaka. MINUSMA and the United Nations country team allocated the full amount of $4 million available over 2015-2016 to quick-impact projects, which led to the launch of 107 projects targeting more than 290,000 direct beneficiaries in the northern regions by 30 June. Quick-impact projects contributed to building confidence in the Mission's mandate and the peace process, including by demonstrating the early dividends of security and stability to the population. Over the reporting period, the Trust Fund in Support of Peace and Security in Mali funded an additional 16 projects, reaching 225,469 people in the north, thanks to 11 donors.

55. The Peacebuilding Fund disbursed 100 per cent of its $10.9 million in earmarked funds through projects and joint programmes implemented by the United Nations country team in the Gao and Timbuktu regions with a view to fostering peacebuilding efforts. The projects enabled 3,856 children, including 1,768 girls, to attend school and set up 650 income-generating activities for internally displaced persons, returnees and refugees. Another project improved access to justice and security for 460 women affected by gender-based violence. From 17 to 22 July, a joint mission by UNDP and the Peacebuilding Support Office visited the Liptako-Gourma region, including Burkina Faso, Mali and the Niger, from 4 to 9 September, to assess the viability of a cross-border peacebuilding programme benefiting communities in the three countries.

56. MINUSMA and the United Nations country team ensured a more efficient division of tasks and complementarity of efforts through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework Plus for 2015-2019, which facilitated an integrated response and division of tasks according to the comparative advantages

of MINUSMA and each agency. Over the reporting period, the Government approved the Framework Plus workplan for 2016. The early recovery cluster has also fostered an integrated approach among UNDP, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and MINUSMA, on the basis of a mapping exercise of interventions in the north. In addition, the programme criticality assessment for the Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions and for parts of the Mopti and Ségou regions was approved on 6 September, after a process led by the United Nations Children's Fund and with the active participation of the United Nations country team and MINUSMA.

57. On 23 June, MINUSMA and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization provided logistical support for the delivery of information technology equipment and furniture to nine private libraries of ancient manuscripts in Timbuktu. On 28 June, the first of three phases was completed in the rehabilitation of the three mosques designated as world heritage sites in Timbuktu. On 27 September, the International Criminal Court sentenced Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi, a member of Ansar Eddine, to nine years' imprisonment. Al Faqi Al Mahdi, who surrendered to the Court on 26 September 2015, pled guilty to the charge of war crimes related to intentionally directing attacks against Muslim shrines and mausoleums in Timbuktu in 2012.

VII. Deployment and capacities

Military

58. As at 20 September, the strength of the military component of MINUSMA stood at 10,635 personnel, or 80 per cent of the authorized strength of 13,289. Women accounted for 1.6 per cent of the force. Key outstanding capabilities included a combat convoy battalion, an armed helicopter unit for Sector North, an additional special forces company for Sector West, additional infantry companies and specialist training, mentoring and equipment for the disposal of explosive ordnance. MINUSMA urgently required an attack helicopter unit and a military medium utility helicopter unit, as those currently in Sector East would be repatriated in early 2017. A replacement of one military medium-utility helicopter unit in Sector West was also needed by the end of 2016. MINUSMA remained underresourced in terms of armoured personnel carriers. Even with the deployment to the Mission of 27 additional armoured personnel carriers, MINUSMA would be 38 armoured personnel carriers short of the number originally planned. In addition, the new mandate included a requirement for an additional 77 armoured personnel carriers.

Police

59. As at 20 September, the strength of the police component of MINUSMA stood at 1,274 personnel, or 66 per cent of its authorized strength of 1,920, with 78 per cent of individual police officers (14 per cent of them women) and 63 per cent of formed police unit personnel (4.5 per cent of them women) deployed. MINUSMA continued to require four formed police units, 11 additional armoured personnel carriers to meet the required standards, a small section of riverine police capacity and additional specialized police personnel, including experts in forensics,

improvised explosive devices, intelligence, transnational organized crime, the trafficking of illicit drugs, small arms and light weapons and counter-terrorism.

Civilian personnel

60. As at 20 September, 85 per cent of all MINUSMA civilian staff had been deployed, including 85 per cent of international staff, 86 per cent of United Nations volunteers and 80 per cent of national staff. Women occupied 28 per cent of the international posts, 28 per cent of United Nations Volunteer positions and 20 per cent of national staff posts. From 7 to 14 July, a civilian staffing review was conducted in order to adjust the Mission's staffing according to the tasks to be carried out under the new mandate. The review concluded that MINUSMA should strengthen its mission support capacity, refocus its civilian capacity towards the implementation of the peace agreement and the support to national institutions as they redeploy to the north, enhance its coordination and cooperation with the United Nations country team and foster its engagement with regional stakeholders and mechanisms.

Camp construction and securing supply routes

61. Harsh climatic conditions, an unstable security environment and a lack of required ground and air transportation infrastructure continue to limit the capacity of MINUSMA to sustain stable supply routes. MINUSMA plans to establish a new major logistics hub in Gao to better serve all MINUSMA locations in northern Mali. Negotiations with Algeria, Benin and the Niger are ongoing with a view to opening supply routes to Mali.

62. MINUSMA completed its relocation to the operational base on 30 June and to its new headquarters on 31 August.

Safety, security and welfare of Mission personnel

63. In response to of the significant security threat in Mali, MINUSMA continued to upgrade and strengthen the defence infrastructure of all existing camps, including by reinforcing its facilities against blasts and installing protected command positions and bunkers. In high-risk areas, the Mission improved living conditions for civilian and uniformed personnel. On 6 July, the tethered aerostat for surveillance deployed in Kidal was determined to not be viable, given volatile weather conditions and the costs of maintenance under such conditions. MINUSMA and Headquarters were engaged in discussions to identify an alternative technical option to the aerostat capabilities.

64. MINUSMA implemented several pilot projects using surveillance and early warning technology to improve the intelligence-gathering capacity of the Mission and to prevent attacks. In Gao and Timbuktu, only 8 unmanned aerial vehicles out of the 38 deployed to the Mission could be used to provide short- and medium-range surveillance, owing to the limited number of ground control stations. To address these shortcomings, the Mission acquired in June one unmanned aerial system with a range of 600 km, which was subsequently deployed to Timbuktu. Another two, one of which would be used as a spare, would be operational by October.

VIII. Conduct and discipline

65. In June, one allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse involving a military staff member was reported. This case and another allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse received in January involving a military staff member remain under investigation by the United Nations. The results of the investigations will be communicated to the troop-contributing countries for appropriate follow-up actions, as required. The case that was reported in December 2015 is now closed, and the individual is barred from participation in future peacekeeping operations. MINUSMA continued its prevention activities, including outreach activities informing the public about the expected standard of conduct for United Nations personnel, especially the policy on zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. Moreover, guidelines from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on sexual exploitation and abuse were disseminated.

IX. Observations

66. I commend the signatory parties of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali for continuing to make progress in its implementation. I welcome in that regard the continued commitment of President Keita and his Government to supporting the peace process, including through the appointment of Mahamadou Diagouraga as his High Representative for the implementation of the peace agreement. I applaud his efforts, together with my Special Representative and the international mediation team, to de-escalate tensions between the signatory armed groups.

67. I welcome the signing, on 19 June 2016, by the Government of Mali, CMA and the Platform, of the agreement that defined the modalities for the establishment of interim administrations in the five northern regions. The long-awaited agreement was a positive step in addressing the priority demand of the signatory armed groups and move forward with other provisions of the peace agreement. I also acknowledge the progress made towards the operationalization of security arrangements contained in the peace agreement, including the Operational Coordination Mechanism, which paved the way for the launch of the mixed patrols in the Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu regions. At this critical juncture, I call on the signatory parties to redouble their efforts to accelerate the implementation of the agreement, and, more specifically, I call on the armed groups to submit the lists of combatants expected to join the cantonment process without further delay. The nomination of Platform representatives to the interim administrations and the designation of CMA combatants to mixed patrols was a first step towards achieving tangible results on the ground.

68. The reporting period was marred by the resumption of hostilities between the signatory armed groups in July, August and September in the Kidal region. I strongly condemn these ceasefire violations and call on the Security Council to consider imposing sanctions against the parties violating the peace agreement. The clashes stalled the implementation of the peace agreement at the critical phase of establishing the interim administrations, obstructing the parties from implementing their commitments made in the agreement. The signatory armed groups must decisively recommit to the peace process and the implementation of the peace agreement. I urge the concerned parties to resolve their differences through the

mechanisms envisaged by the peace agreement and agree to a formal cessation of hostilities.

69. For the peace process to advance in earnest, it is critical that the Malian parties adhere in good faith to the peace agreement and commit themselves to achieving key priorities, including the progressive redeployment of the Malian defence and security forces and re-establishment of State authority throughout the country. The United Nations, through MINUSMA, will continue to support the parties in their efforts to restore State authority in the north. In this context, I reiterate the call made by the Security Council in its resolution 2295 (2016) for the Government to define, in consultation with the other signatories and with the support of MINUSMA and regional and international stakeholders, clear benchmarks and timelines for the implementation of the peace agreement.

70. I welcome the announcement of the upcoming elections in Mali. The elections have the potential to facilitate the redeployment of State administrative functions to the north. I cali on the Government to achieve consensus on the holding of the elections and ensure the inclusiveness and transparency thereof. In conjunction, I urge the Government to accelerate the preparations for the national conference on understanding, which is expected to facilitate national reconciliation, help to address the root causes of the conflict in Mali and generate consensus on the way forward. I call on the Government to ensure a wide consultation process for the conference, involving all concerned stakeholders, including civil society, women and youth.

71. Moving forward, a successful cantonment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process constitutes a prerequisite for peace in Mali. It is critical that the signatory armed groups demonstrate their will to pursue such a process by taking decisive actions, including by designating the participants in the cantonment, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. I welcome the recent appointment of CMA representatives to the national commissions on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and on integration, as well as to the National Council for Security Sector Reform. I call on the Government to accelerate the process for the adoption of a national strategy designed to reform the security sector and to combine the law on military programming and the draft legislation on national security into a programming law on defence and security.

72. I remain concerned by the human rights situation throughout the country. I strongly condemn the abuses committed against the civilian population during the recent clashes in the Kidal region. I impress upon the signatory armed groups that these human rights violations are unacceptable. I am concerned about the increasing establishment of checkpoints and military bases by signatory armed groups and their affiliates, particularly in the Timbuktu region, and human rights violations against civilians reported around these outposts. I am also concerned about the excessive use of force by the Malian defence and security forces during counter-terrorism operations. Such violations play right into the hands of terrorists. I urge all concerned parties to respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as well as their obligations under the peace agreement. I denounce the increase in intracommunal and intercommunal violence in the northern and central regions, which constitute obstacles to national reconciliation and peaceful cohabitation. In this regard, I urge the Government to accelerate the

opening of the regional offices of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission in order to begin documenting abuses and violations.

73. I am extremely concerned by the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in certain regions of Mali and by the great number of schools that remain closed in the regions affected by crisis. I condemn the attacks and robberies perpetrated against humanitarian actors, including the pillaging of the World Food Programme warehouse in Kidal. I call on all Malian parties to help facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need. I commend the humanitarian actors for continuing to support the Government in the provision of basic social services to the people in need in an extremely challenging environment.

74. The attacks against the Malian, French and MINUSMA forces have increased and become more sophisticated and complex. These attacks are absolutely unacceptable and constitute serious violations of international law. I express my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and the Governments of all those who have lost their lives. The ever-growing number of attacks in the central regions is a source of great concern. I urge the Malian parties to accelerate the implementation of the provisions of the peace agreement concerning social cohesion in order to address the grievances of the population and halt the spread of violent extremism. The scale of the violent extremist and terrorist attacks in Mali require a united response by the international community — otherwise, there is a risk that the situation could deteriorate and spread. I urge Member States to reinforce international cooperation, in particular cooperation among the countries of the region. I fully support the efforts by MINUSMA to engage with the other countries of the G-5 Sahel, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania and the Niger, and with other neighbouring countries, to deploy the liaison officers requested by the Security Council in its resolution 2295 (2016). MINUSMA stands ready to integrate the liaison officers in its headquarters in order to strengthen cooperation on border security issues and intelligence-sharing.

75. The reinforcement of the posture and capacities of MINUSMA and the compliance of all parties with their obligations under the peace agreement is expected to allow MINUSMA to effectively support the Government of Mali and its people in the protection of civilians and the promotion of sustainable peace, stability and development in Mali. In order for MINUSMA to be able to implement its mandated tasks, it is indispensable that the Mission be provided with the necessary equipment. If no helicopters are deployed to replace the departing units, MINUSMA will lack two utility helicopter units (eight medium utility helicopters) and two armed helicopter units (six attack helicopters) out of the required three utility helicopter units (12 helicopters) and three armed helicopter units (nine helicopters) by early 2017. The lack of those helicopters will have a negative impact on the operational performance of the Mission owing to a diminished mobility and capacity to conduct casualty and medical evacuations. MINUSMA and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations are identifying mechanisms and modalities to deploy armoured personnel carriers, the rapid intervention force from the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire, surveillance, reconnaissance and information companies, and specialized combat battalions for the protection of convoys. I urge members of the Security Council and the international partners of Mali to increase their support to ensure that these outstanding needs and capacity gaps are swiftly addressed, including through bilateral support to the troop-contributing countries of MINUSMA. Without such urgent support, the Mission will be seriously

handicapped in carrying out its mandate, and the confidence that the signatory parties and the population have in the Mission will suffer.

76. Lastly, I wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, for his tireless efforts in advancing the peace process. I commend the members of the international mediation team for their sustained support to the Malian parties. I also pay tribute to the men and women of MINUSMA and to the troop- and police-contributing countries for their dedication to the Mission. I express my gratitude to the African Union, the Economic Community for Western African States, the European Union, bilateral partners, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, non-governmental organizations and all other partners, who spared no effort to contribute to peace and security in Mali under very difficult conditions.

Annex

Military and police strength of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali as at 31 August 2016

	Military component			*Police component*								
	(staff officers and units)			*Individual police officers*			*Formed police units*			*Total police*		
Country	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*	*Men*	*Women*	*Total*
Albania												
Algeria												
Argentina												
Armenia												
Australia												
Austria	6		6									
Bangladesh	1 417		1 417				136		136	136		136
Belgium	7		7									
Benin	260		260	36	1	37	140		140	176	1	177
Bhutan	3		3									
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)												
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2		2									
Botswana												
Brazil												
Brunei Darussalam												
Bulgaria												
Burkina Faso	1 692	29	1 721	19	1	20	133	7	140	152	8	160
Burundi				14		14				14		14
Cambodia	291	10	301									
Cameroon	3		3	15		15				15		15
Canada												
Central African Republic												
Chad	1 443		1 443	5	4	9				5	4	9
Chile												
China	382	15	397									
Colombia												
Congo												
Côte d'Ivoire	6		6									
Croatia												
Cyprus												
Czechia	25		25									

Country	Military component (staff officers and units)			Police component: Individual police officers			Police component: Formed police units			Police component: Total police		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Democratic Republic of the Congo				5	1	6				5	1	6
Denmark	46	1	47	6		6				6		6
Djibouti										1		1
Dominica												
Dominican Republic												
Ecuador												
Egypt	67		67	5		5				5		5
El Salvador	88	4	92									
Estonia	9		9									
Ethiopia	1		1									
Fiji												
Finland	5		5									
France	24	2	26	9		9				9		9
Gabon												
Gambia	5		5									
Germany	251		251	13	2	15				13	2	15
Ghana	217		217									
Greece												
Grenada												
Guatemala												
Guinea	855	6	861	7	3	10				7	3	10
Guinea-Bissau	1		1									
Honduras												
Hungary												
Iceland												
India												
Indonesia	143	4	147									
Ireland												
Israel												
Italy	1		1									
Jamaica												
Japan												
Jordan	1		1	1		1				1		1
Kazakhstan												
Kenya	3	4	7									
Kyrgyzstan												
Latvia	1		1									

	Military component			Police component								
	(staff officers and units)			Individual police officers			Formed police units			Total police		
Country	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Lesotho												
Liberia	43	2	45									
Libya												
Lithuania	1		1									
Luxembourg												
Madagascar				2		2				2		2
Malawi												
Malaysia												
Mauritania	4		4									
Mongolia												
Montenegro												
Morocco												
Mozambique												
Namibia												
Nepal	145	4	149									
Netherlands	297	18	315	20	2	22				20	2	22
New Zealand												
Niger	855	6	861	13	14	27				13	14	27
Nigeria	69	13	82	2		2	108	31	139	110	31	141
Norway	62	9	71									
Pakistan												
Palau												
Papua New Guinea												
Paraguay												
Peru												
Philippines												
Poland												
Portugal	2		2									
Qatar												
Republic of Korea												
Republic of Moldova												
Romania	1		1	4		4				4		4
Russian Federation												
Rwanda												
Samoa												
Senegal	569	10	579	14	1	15	269	9	278	283	10	293
Serbia												
Sierra Leone	7		7									

	Military component			Police component								
	(staff officers and units)			Individual police officers			Formed police units			Total police		
Country	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Singapore												
Slovakia												
Slovenia												
South Africa												
Spain												
Sri Lanka												
Sweden	193	16	209	5	4	9				5	4	9
Switzerland	8		8	2		2				2		2
Tajikistan												
Thailand												
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia												
Timor-Leste												
Togo	922	15	937	3		3	135	5	140	138	5	143
Tunisia				46	1	47				46	1	47
Turkey				2		2				2		2
Uganda												
Ukraine												
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	2		2									
United Republic of Tanzania												
United States of America	10		10									
Uruguay												
Vanuatu												
Yemen	6		6	9		9				9		9
Zambia												
Zimbabwe												
Total	**10 452**	**168**	**10 620**	**257**	**34**	**291**	**921**	**52**	**973**	**1 178**	**86**	**1 264**

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Geospatial Information Section (formerly Cartographic Section)